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VI.—NE EXTRA OLEAS.



A FEW years ago, the Gymnasium at Zweibruecken celebrated its 350th anniversary. In connection with this celebration, the archives of the institution were searched for materials that had a bearing on the personal history of some of the distinguished alumni of the institution. Among other things, there was brought to light the report of ten year old Johann Friedrich Hahn, who later in life won distinction as a poet, and became a founder of the Goettinger Hainbund. The report, made out by Berckmann and bearing date of 1764, contains very flattering comments on Hahn under the rubrics *memoria*, *judicium*, and *mores*, but under the rubric *diligentia* is found the entry *extra oleas nonnihil latus*. The phrase *extra oleas*, which is not found in the ordinary lexica of classical Latin nor in Ducange, for a long time proved a puzzle to the Zweibruecken professors, but finally the rector of the Gymnasium, Dr. H. Stich, found the solution. He happened to be reading the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. When he reached verses 993–995, *μόνον ὅπως/μή σ' ὁ θυμὸς ἀρπάσας/ἐκτὸς οἴσει τῶν ἐλαῶν*, and compared the scholia on the passage, he realized that the words *ἐκτὸς τῶν ἐλαῶν* were the original of the erstwhile enigmatic *extra oleas*. He thereupon published a communication on the subject in *Philologus* 1912, 568 sqq., in which he gave reasons for believing that Berckmann had employed the phrase in the above-mentioned report as a conscious reminiscence of Aristophanes. The only question that troubled Stich was as to whether Berckmann had been the first and only person to translate the uncommon Greek proverbial expression into Latin.

In a note appended to Stich's communication, the editor, Crusius, calls attention to the fact that the phrase *extra oleas*

is found in the Erasmian collection of proverbs,¹ and, in view of its presence there, he rejects the notion that the use of the phrase in Berckmann's report had been due to a personal conceit of the author. Instead, he advances the theory that the expression in question had passed from the Adagia of Erasmus into the Latin vernacular of the schools. In support of this theory, he instances the use of the German word *Sparte*², which, while ultimately derived from a well-known Greek proverb, has for its immediate source the Latin vernacular of the academic circles, and these, as Crusius maintains, drew upon Erasmus, Adag. Chil. II 5, 1.³

Without wishing to underestimate the influence of Erasmus on the language of the learned world, the writer does not be-

¹ Chil. II, Centur. II, Prov. 10 (I quote the exact text of the ed. of 1703, Lugduni Batavorum, *Petri Vander Aa*): "*Extra oleas. ἐκτὸς τῶν ἐλαιῶν φέρεται*, i. e. *Extra oleas fertur*. Ubi quis terminos praescriptos transgreditur, aut aliena, nec ad rem pertinentia facit, dicitur. Aristophanes in Ranis: *Νῆ σέ ὁ θυμὸς ἀπάσας/ Εἰς τὸς οἴσει τῶν ἐλαιῶν*, i. e. *Ira ne te concitum/ Rapiat extra olivas*. Interpres adagium hinc natum ait. *Stadia, in quibus currendi certamina peragebantur, oleis per seriem positis, utrinque sepiebantur, quas praeterire non licebat: proinde qui praeteriisset oleas, extra stadium currere videbatur*".

² Grimm, Deutsches Woerterbuch, s. v. *Sparte*: "*Sparte, f. pfruende, antheil, amt, aufgabe, hauptsaechlich in der sprache akademisch gebildeter kreise. aus dem spaetmittellat. sparta, besonders in den redensarten: spartam nancisci, eine pfruende erhalten. KLUGE etymol. wb. 6 369a, und spartam et Martham, pfarre und quarre. studentenspr. 127a dem wol wieder griech. σπάρτην, erbgut, zu grunde liegt; vgl. die redensart σπάρτην ἔλαχες. zeitschr. fuer deutsche wortforschung 1, 365; doch vgl. auch ital. spartire, spartare, scheiden, absondern. KRAMER (1693) III4a*".

³ Ed. 1703 (above cited), coll. 551 sqq.: "*Spartam nactus es, hanc orna. Η*ν ἔλαχες, Σπάρταν κόσμει*, i. e. *Spartam, quam nactus es, orna, sive administra. Admonet adagium, ut quamcunque provinciam erimus forte nacti, ei nos accomodemus, proque hujus dignitate nos geramus. M. Tullius ad Atticum lib. 4. Epistola 6. Reliquum est; Σπάρταν ἔλαχες, ταύταν κόσμει. Non me hercle possum . . . Idem ad eundem lib. 1. Eam ob causam, quam mihi dicis obtigisse Σπάρταν, non modo nunquam deseram, sed etiam si ab illa deserar, in mea pristina sententia permanebo. . . . Proverbium igitur ad varios usus licebit accommodare: vel cum admonebimus, ut suam quisque personam, quam suscepit, cum decore tueatur. Episcopus es, ne Satrapam agas, sed Episcopum. Maritus es, cura quae mariti sunt officia.*" etc. etc. for more than three additional columns.

lieve that the example chosen to illustrate it is convincing. The proverb Σάρτην ἔλαχες, ταύτην κόσμει, with its variations, seems to have been popular with the Greeks. A glance at the lexicon of Stephanus, or a brief search in the Corpus Paroemiographorum, will suffice to show that. As for the Romans, Cicero reveals their attitude, ad Att. 4, 6 and 1, 20, and the ordinary lexica contain references to these passages. In the presence of the weighty example of Cicero, it certainly required no Erasmus, influential though he was, to set the pace, and the great possibilities of the proverb for purposes of moral instruction must have made it exceedingly popular with pedagogues and the clergy.

But what are the facts with regard to the phrase *extra oleas*? Stich, as was pointed out above, searched the lexica in vain for it. The present writer has been able to locate it in several lexica, as follows: 1. The Lexicon Philologicum of Matthias Martinius, Francofurti, 1655: "*Extra oleas* Aristoph. in Ranis: ἐκτὸς ὁσεί τῶν ἐλαιῶν". Then follows the citation of the scholiast's explanation. 2. Andreae Reyheri Lexicon Latino-Germanicum, Lipsiae et Francofurti, 1696: "*Extra oleas vagari*. Prov. *Officii limites transgredi*, aus dem Geschirr schlagen, aus den Schrancken schreiten". Then follows the quotation, from the Adagia, of Erasmus' explanation, with due credit to Erasmus. 3. Basili Fabri Thesaurus Eruditionis Scholasticae, rev. and enlarged by Cellarius, Lipsiae, 1696: "*Extra oleas vagari*, est extra fines legitimos sive terminos vagari. Vide scholiastem Aristophanis in Ranas act. 4 sc. 1 sub fin." The 1717 edition has the same, with the addition of the German translation, "die schrancken ueberschreiten, aus dem geschirr schlagen". 4. Gesner, Novus Linguae et Eruditionis Romanae Thesaurus, Lipsiae 1749: "*Olea arbor ad terminos designandos adhibebatur, unde prou. Extra oleas vagari*. Vid. Scholast. Aristoph. in Ran. act. 4 sc. 1 sub f. Victor. Var. Lect. 31, 10". 5. Ainsworth's Thesaurus Linguae Latinae Compendiarius, 4th ed., London, 1752: "*Extra oleas, Prov. to go beyond the bounds*". It is curious to note that some of the later editions of this popular work, among them one printed in 1847, make the mistake of attributing the phrase "*Extra oleas, To go beyond the bounds*", to Horace. Forcellini, who finished his lexicon

in 1755, does not mention the phrase, and as the London edition of Stephanus (Roberti Stephani Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, Editio Nova prioribus multo auctor et emendatior, Londini, 1734-5) does not contain the expression, which is absent also from the Lyons Thesaurus of 1573 and from Thomas Cooper's Thesaurus, London, 1578, the inference is that the paragraphs just cited from Gesner and Ainsworth are due to Faber's Thesaurus. This inference is further strengthened by Ainsworth's acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Faber, and by the fact that Gesner issued an edition of Faber in 1726. The commentators on Aristoph. Ran. give no help, except that Kock cites Ruhnken's remark on Plato, Cratyl. 414 B, ἐκτὸς δρόμον φερόμενον, "quod proverbii formam habet et simile est notissimo *extra oleas vagari*". Kock does not state that this remark is taken from Ruhnken's commentary on the word δρόμοι in his edition¹ of Timaeus' Lexicon Vocum Platoniarum, but this information is furnished by Stallbaum on Cratyl. 414 B, who, speaking of ἐκτὸς δρόμον φερόμενον, remarks "quod bene Ruhnkenius ad Tim. Gloss. p. 89. composuit cum notissimo illo *extra oleas vagari*."

From the facts as thus far stated, it seems fairly clear that the expression *extra oleas* lacks literary support, and, if the phrase was really a "notissimum", as Ruhnken and Stallbaum contend, one might feel inclined with Crusius to attribute its vogue to the influence of Erasmus and the Erasmians.

But there is an important fact which has not been stated above, and which has been overlooked by both Stich and Crusius. This fact is that the phrase *ne extra oleas* occupies a conspicuous place in the annals of printing. From 1642 to 1681, during all but the first four years of the entire period of the existence of the Amsterdam house of Elzevirs, the phrase *ne extra oleas* was used by that house as a motto of one of its distinctive printer's marks. The mark in question, technically known as the "Minerva", may be described as follows. The center of the design is occupied by an olive-tree. To the right under one of the branches of the olive-tree stands Minerva with her left hand holding the top of her Gorgon shield, the lower end of which is resting on the ground near

¹ 1 ed. 1754; 2 ed. 1789. Only the second edition as incorporated in Kock's editio nova, Lipsiae 1828, has been accessible to the writer.

her left foot. With the right hand the goddess holds up one end of a banderole, the other end of which is supported by a twig of the lower left-hand branch of the tree. The banderole is thus made to swing in front of the trunk of the olive-tree, so that the legend *ne extra oleas*, which is inscribed on the banderole, is easily read and may be taken in at a glance. On the ground to the left of the trunk of the tree sits an owl.

As to the source of the motto, which was first employed by Louis Elzevir in 1642, Willems, *Les Elzevier* (Bruxelles, 1880), p. xciii, had already stated that the phrase is foreign to Latin, that it is a translation of the Greek of Aristophanes, and that it was taken from the Adagia of Erasmus. He presented no documentary evidence of the truth of the last statement, and, indeed, his language¹ seems to imply that there is none. It is well, therefore, in this connection, to remember that the younger Louis Elzevir, unlike the Louis Elzevir that founded the Leyden establishment, was a highly educated man. He had been enrolled in the philosophical department of the University of Leyden, and, after the completion of his studies, had traveled extensively for the Leyden house, and had come in contact with many learned men. So it is very possible that when he had established a business of his own, and was casting about for a motto, he may have selected the proverbial expression from his own reading, or he may have enlisted the help of the distinguished scholar Daniel Heinsius, who was the ever faithful friend and constant adviser of the Elzevirs. Imitation, doubtless, figured largely in the choice of the motto, as it did in the composition of the design. When one compares the later book-mark of Robert Stephanus, as found, for example, in Ioachimi Fortii Ringelbergii Andoverpiani Rhetorica of the year 1548, and as adopted by Henry Stephanus (cf. his *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, and the facsimiles in the Didot edition), one cannot help thinking that it furnished the cue for both the Leyden "Solitaire" and the Amsterdam "Minerva". In the "Solitaire", the olive-tree is replaced by the elm surrounded by a grape-vine with clust-

¹"Nous serions fort en peine de fournir l'explication de la devise *Ne extra oleas*, si nous n'avions vérifié qu'elle a été prise dans le recueil des *Adages* d'Erasmus. Ce dicton, étranger à la latinité, est traduit d'un passage d'Aristophane", etc.

ers of grapes, the philosopher is retained, and the motto becomes *non solus*. In the Amsterdam "Minerva", which is later than the "Solitaire", the seeker after wisdom is replaced by the goddess of wisdom, who naturally is accompanied by her attributes, as described above. The Minerva motif was plainly borrowed from the seal of the university of Leyden,¹ and, when once this motif had been selected, it was an easy step from the *noli altum sapere* (Rom. 11, 20), "Be not high-minded", of Robert Stephanus to the *ne extra oleas* (Ran. 994-5), "Stay within the bounds of wisdom", of Louis Elzevir.

The lists of Elzevir publications given by Willems, o. c., reveal the fact that nine catalogues and over 256 of the more than 600 editions of works published by Louis and Daniel Elzevir, conjointly or individually, have the "Minerva" with the motto *ne extra oleas*. This number includes such works as the beautiful 1652 edition of Meibom's *Antiquae musicae auctores septem*,² and the splendid *variorum Tacitus* of 1672, as also repeated editions of Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, Comenius' *Janua*, Descartes' works, Corvinus, *Adagiorum epitome* of Erasmus, Vossius' *Clenardus*, the Greek New Testament, Select Letters and Speeches of Cicero for schools, Hesiod, Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae*, Justinian, Duez' method of French, German, Italian and Latin, and other important works in the fields of literature, language, medicine, law and natural science.

When one considers that in addition to the number, the variety, and the importance of the works published under the imprint of the Minerva mark, the Amsterdam Elzevirs had business connections with the whole of Europe, that they were regularly represented at the great Frankfort fair, that they en-

¹ The Leyden Elzevirs were for many years the official university printers, and Daniel Heinsius was the successor of Joseph Scaliger at the University of Leyden. The mark of Robert Winter of Basle was a Minerva with Gorgon shield, spear and owl, and a couple of olive-branches forming more or less of a frame for the whole. The design is so different from that of the Amsterdam "Minerva" that near relationship between the two seems very doubtful.

² The vignette at the beginning of this article has been reproduced from a copy of Meibom in the possession of the Library of the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, Md.

joyed the monopoly of supplying Germany with foreign books, and that many of their books were copyrighted in Germany, one cannot resist the conclusion that the phrase *ne extra oleas* must have been familiar to the whole scholarly world of the latter part of the seventeenth century and of the beginning of the eighteenth. To men like Gesner and Ruhnken it was indeed a "notissimum", and its employment by Berckmann, in modified form, shows that he counted on being understood. Even Stallbaum, in the nineteenth century, was probably not guilty of exaggeration when he claimed acquaintance with it, though now, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the phrase seems almost completely to have faded from memory.

Of course, it might be contended that the phrase *extra oleas* may have been current at the time of the founding of the Amsterdam house of Elzevirs, but no proof has as yet been presented, and all indications point to the contrary. The matter is well worth investigation, but the search, to be profitable, would seem to require the resources of European libraries.¹

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¹After the above had reached the stage of page-proof, I came across a passage in Pieters, *Annales de l'Imprimerie Elsevirienne*, p. 173, from which it appears that Adry had already, though in a casual way, connected the Elzevir "Minerva" and the Stephanus "Olive". The passage reads as follows: "Adry dit que ce proverbe des grecs: *Ne extra oleas*, signifie *ne passez pas les bornes* (parce qu'à une des extrémités du stade étaient plantés des oliviers) et que les Estienne, qui avaient également adopté cet arbre, l'avaient accompagné de cette devise ci: *Noli altum sapere*".